



Francis Dietz <DietzF@asme.org> on 10/04/2001 11:27:13 AM

To: YMP\_SR@ymp.gov  
cc:

RECEIVED

OCT 05 2001

Subject: Federal Register Notice Comments

Part of Records Package / Supplement / Correction

Dear Carol Hanlon:

The Energy Committee of the Council on Engineering, American Society of Mechanical Engineers, is pleased to submit the attached comments in response to a Federal Register Notice of August 21, 2001.

It is our understanding that the original due date for these comments, September 21, had been extended to October 5. If this is incorrect, please accept our apologies and hopes that our comments will be useful anyway.

Sincerely,

Francis J. Dietz  
Government Relations Representative,  
Technology Policy  
ASME International  
Suite 906  
1828 L Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 785-3756  
(202) 429-9417 fax



- yuccastatement.doc

**Statement of the Energy Committee of the Council on Engineering, ASME  
International on The Suitability of the Yucca Mountain, Nevada Site as a  
Repository for Spent Civilian Nuclear Fuel**

**October 2001**

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is responsible for the interim storage and ultimate disposal of spent civilian nuclear fuel now temporarily stored on-site at operating and decommissioned nuclear power plants throughout the United States. Congress passed the Nuclear Waste Policy Act in 1982, which directed DOE to conduct studies to identify potential repository sites, determine their suitability, and select the most suitable site. The Act stipulated that the chosen site accept spent nuclear fuel by January 1, 1998.

On May 4, 2001, DOE issued a landmark evaluation of the Yucca Mountain site for spent nuclear fuel from commercial nuclear plants, and high-level radioactive waste from our national defense programs. The evaluation concluded that:

- Natural and engineered barriers will prevent radiation exposure to the public for 10,000 years.
- The environmental impacts associated with transportation of spent fuel, and the risk of all conceivable - and some highly improbable - accidents was demonstrated to be very low and quite acceptable.

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 also established the Nuclear Waste Fund. To date this fund has received from nuclear electricity customers more than \$17.9 billion, of which \$10 billion is earmarked for the construction and operation of the repository. The fund continues to grow from the one-mill/kwh fee on nuclear-generated electricity.

The Energy Committee of the Council on Engineering, ASME International, has considered the DOE technical position on these engineered waste barriers and systems, and recommends that the DOE findings be accepted. We further recommend that:

- Prompt action be taken to construct an Intermediate Spent Fuel Storage Facility to fulfill the government's obligation to handle this material.
- Steps be taken to develop the Yucca Mountain, Nevada site to accommodate radioactive material that has no further beneficial use for our citizens.

We have reached the point where technical, environmental, and other studies have indicated that the impact to the public of the proposed Yucca Mountain repository site are deemed very low and acceptable from a technical engineering risk perspective. These actions will serve to reassure the U.S. public that a feasible method exists for storage and ultimate disposal of highly radioactive nuclear waste. We believe that this is an important step and represents a rational use and application of modern engineering methods for waste storage.

**This position statement represents the views of the Energy Committee of the Council on Engineering, ASME International, and is not necessarily a position of the Society as a whole.**